

Valued Assets:

Effort:

"It is virtually impossible to do anything worthwhile without sustained effort."

~Carol Dweck

"No matter what one's ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishments."

~Dweck

"Nobody gets to be good at something without effort, no matter what your aptitude is."

~Angela Duckworth

"Talent is how quickly your skills improve when you invest effort. Achievement is what happens when you take acquired skills and use them.

Talent x Effort = Skill

Skill x Effort = Achievement...Effort counts twice!"

~Duckworth

"Dreams don't work unless you do."

~ John Maxwell

--**Effort** is the most important part of a growth mindset classroom and needs to be seen and valued as such by students (and teachers) in order to *become smart*, as opposed to believing effort means lack of intelligence or ability.⁷²

--**Effort** does not mean just time spent studying (passive), but rather effort must be a "work of the mind" (active), both meaningful and mindful. It is the difference between time spent versus effort invested.⁷³

--**Effort** is a necessary part of learning for *everyone*. If students are given work that does not challenge them, suggest the work is boring and less useful for their brain growth. It is your role to provide more challenging work that

⁷² Aditomo, 2015; Wiersema et al, 2015

⁷³ Wiersema et al, 2015 p. 2

will help *all* students to continue to learn and grow. Present challenging tasks as exciting and ones that help their brains grow stronger and make learning easier over time. Work should be adjusted so students are neither struggling nor coasting. Tasks that consistently require no effort put a student at risk of developing a fixed mindset, believing they are smart only if they succeed without putting forth effort.⁷⁴

--Teach and reinforce to students that they can master any skill if enough **effort** is put into it; natural talent/intelligence is just a small part of mastering a skill.⁷⁵ Consistent effort and passion are key, we grow and improve in school and in life through continuous effort.

--Dweck's 30 plus years of research has shown that the most motivated and resilient students are the ones who believe their abilities can be developed through their own **effort**.⁷⁶ We all grow and improve through continuous, consistent effort, in school and throughout our lives. The need for effort does not stop when school ends!

***As you will hear me say repeatedly, exemplifying experts who struggled before they succeeded is a very meaningful strategy to teach students that everyone must put forth **effort** if they are to become good at something.

--A great website for precisely this purpose is, *Goalcast*:

www.goalcast.com

On this website teachers and students can find short videos about famous people they know and the challenges they incurred on their difficult and varied roads to success. Discussions about the growth mindset qualities that were observed should follow the videos. It is by doing this that students realize everyone who is successful puts in **effort** and comes up against challenges. This knowledge takes the pressure off of students who feel others succeed easily, while their success requires effort.

⁷⁴ Duckworth, 2016; Esperza et al, 2014

⁷⁵ Wu, 2014

⁷⁶ Aditomo, 2015

Grit and Perseverance:

“Grit in a word is stamina. But it is not just stamina in your effort. It’s also stamina in your direction, stamina in your interests.”
~Angela Duckworth

“Grit is living life like a marathon, not like a sprint.”
~Duckworth

“If you are never able to tolerate a little bit of pain and discomfort, you’ll never get better.”
~Duckworth

“Grittier students are more likely to earn their diplomas; grittier teachers are more effective in the classroom. Grittier soldiers are more likely to complete their training, and grittier salespeople are more likely to keep their jobs. The more challenging the domain, the more grit seems to matter.”
~Duckworth

“Grit is about working on something you care about so much that you’re willing to stay loyal to it.”
~Duckworth

“I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious.”
~Albert Einstein

“Fall down seven times, get up eight.”
~Japanese Proverb

--**Grit, or perseverance and passion over time**, is vital to student growth. Perseverance is working hard and bouncing back from setbacks. Passion is staying focused on consistent goals over time, and Duckworth says it is the more difficult of the two parts.⁷⁷ Consistency over time is key, not so much the intensity involved. Remember Aesop’s fable about the tortoise and the

hare? The hare started out with intensity, then became overconfident with his lead and took a nap. The tortoise on the other hand, just kept moving; he never gave up, he showed grit and won the race! It is not the intensity, but rather the consistency over time that really matters.⁷⁸ Think about the struggle children learning to write their letters endure. It is only by writing them over and over and over that they are able to master writing.

--True learning comes when we use **grit** and fight through the discomfort of not knowing. A willingness to postpone completion of a task and to give thought to problems rather than to avoid them increases learning. It is the *struggle* that is necessary to one's learning!

"The major difference between less skilled and more productive learners is not their intelligence, but their willingness to endure disorientation, that feeling of being lost or confused."

~Sheridan Blau

--In all of Duckworth's research, grit proved to be a huge *predictor of success* in all areas of one's life through college: in academics, athletics, and business.⁷⁹

--**Grit** is essential to student growth and is an important element of the growth mindset. Students benefit greatly from the fostering and encouragement of grittiness in the classroom. Grit is yet another asset that helps develop the all-important critical thinking.

For you to develop a **classroom of grittiness** you must:

- 1) Establish high expectations. Time and effort toward a goal makes it difficult for students to give up because now they are invested in the learning process toward their goal. Stress to students that frustrations and obstacles are inevitable in learning and growing.
- 2) You must advocate for a growth mindset. Effort should be equated with learning more and growing over time. Recognize students for effort not for intelligence. Teacher feedback that focuses on effort makes students want to stretch themselves for their teachers and their learning/growth. Consider recognizing "Students of the Unit"—where students are acknowledged for displaying perseverance, not for high test

⁷⁸ Blazer, 2011; Duckor, 2017

⁷⁹ Duckworth, 2016

- scores. Recognition for factors students can control pushes them toward grittiness.
- 3) You must bring passion for your subject area into your teaching and classroom! *Grit is perseverance AND passion over time.* Students will develop passion if it is modeled by you. Impassioned students also will find it harder to walk away from challenges and struggles. Remember, passion is contagious (but so is lack of passion)! You must be willing to work through the same things that you expect of your students.
 - 4) Create a class mission statement. This helps students believe that working through the inevitable frustration will be worth the effort. Seek student ownership, which will encourage even greater student investment.⁸⁰

Resiliency:

“The moment we believe that success is determined by an ingrained level of ability as opposed to resilience and hard work, we will be brittle in the face of adversity.”

~Joshua Waitzkin

“It’s your reaction to adversity, not adversity itself that determines how your life story will develop.”

~Dieter Uchtdorf

“Persistence and resilience come from having been given the chance to work through difficult problems.”

~Margaret Thatcher

“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up.”

~Nelson Mandela

--The growth mindset instills in students that **learning is a process which takes time and effort.**⁸¹ So, students need to be willing to wrestle challenging problems and exercise greater **resilience, or the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties,** following academic setbacks.⁸² One thing everyone can count on in learning and in life is struggle; those who give up in the face of adversity, sadly, will not reach their goals.

--Struggle is an important part of learning. It can knock you down or bring out the fight in you, causing you to find new strategies to make "it" (whatever "it" may be) work.

--"True learning depends on our tolerance threshold, upon how long we can wrestle with doubt."⁸³ It is this confusion that creates more productive learners and critical thinkers. It is when teachers and students believe in and act on the value of mistakes that rising achievement levels will be seen!

Responsibility:

"The time is always right to do the right thing."

~Martin Luther King Jr.

"Though I am not always responsible for what happens to me,
I am responsible for how I handle what happens to me."

~Zig Ziglar

"Quit making excuses. Putting it off. Complaining about it.
Dreaming about it. Whining about it. Crying about it.
Believing you can't. Worrying if you can. Waiting until you are older.
Make a plan and *just do it.*"

~Nike

--**Student ownership and responsibility** (Coined "SOAR" by The National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools) are key assets in a growth mindset classroom.

⁸¹ Miller, 2013

⁸² Barnes and Five, 2016

⁸³ Miller, 2013, p. 5

SOAR habits include:

- Believing one can take on challenging academic tasks successfully,
- Coming to class prepared (both physically and mentally),
- Completing tasks in a timely manner,
- Seeking help when one needs it.⁸⁴

--**Responsibility**: Practice self-control, be accountable for your choices, finish what you begin, and do your best and keep trying!

In our consumer driven society, education is one area where people are content to settle for less. Ownership and responsibility for one's own learning combats this.

~Coffman

--Integrating **responsibility** into one's beliefs and behaviors reaches far beyond school. It helps students become responsible citizens and productive members of society throughout their lives, which is after all, the ultimate goal of education!⁸⁵

Teach students to:

--monitor their internal conversations/thinking, as these conversations have a strong impact on: how we think, is how we feel, is how we act, is how we think, is how we feel, is how we act...it's a cycle, in which at least one factor needs to change for the other two to follow.

Risk:

"Conventional wisdom tells us that without the willingness to take risks—including the risk of failure—nothing of significance would ever be discovered."

~Donna Miller

⁸⁴ The National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools, 2014

⁸⁵ Wu, 2014

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Wherever you see a successful business (Substitute anything for the word business!), someone once made a courageous decision."

~Peter Drucker

"If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original."

~Sir Ken Robinson

--Think about any real accomplishment of yours or someone well known, whether it be an athletic achievement or an invention that makes our lives easier. Without **taking a chance**, trying something one didn't feel comfortable with initially, the accomplishment could not have been reached! Students need to believe in themselves and feel secure within the four walls of their classroom in order to spread their wings and learn to fly; to take risks and make mistakes!⁸⁶ This is why it is so important to discuss those who are accomplished but once struggled, so students really understand what it takes to succeed! The Beatles, Walt Disney, and Sylvester Stallone, to name just a few, were all turned away and/or fired more than once before reaching success, a place they wouldn't have reached had they not taken risks or were easily discouraged. When we watch the Olympics, the athletes make their athletic feats seem so easy and natural. It is easy to forget how much work and sweat, how many tears, how many tries, went into those few minutes of "WOW" we watch; imagine going off a ski jump for your first time!

--Risk in the classroom involves trying something one is not completely comfortable with and then working to improve his or her skills. I went through my school years believing I was not good at math. When my teachers would ask the class to try a problem before he or she went over it, I would just sit there, waiting for the teacher to show me exactly how to do it. I was too afraid to try it, already convinced I was going to do it wrong. My beliefs limited my learning and the possibility of me proving to myself that I could in fact do it! Let students know they will never know if they can do something if fear keeps them from trying. Encourage and applaud trying.

Consistency:

"What matters in the long run is sticking with things and working daily to get better at them. Consistency of effort over the long haul is everything."

~Duckworth

"Successful people do consistently what normal people do occasionally."

~Pastor Craig Groeschel

--After my extensive research, Pastor Groeschel's statement makes more sense than ever before! What matters is the effort one exerts consistently over time in order to grow, it's the hours of mindful practice one accrues, not the short spurts one exerts until he or she is faced with challenges, sometimes even resulting in one quitting. The talent one is born with but neglects to develop with consistent effort and practice, unfortunately is lost. Almost everyone has had a great idea at some point; it is the follow through that leads to achievement. Many people try things in short spurts, but only the successful stick with it.

--Trying a new task in the classroom in order to learn it must happen consistency. Attempting something new once or twice may not be enough to learn it; some tasks can be mastered quickly and others take more time and consistent effort for true mastery. Mastery of something such as complex math concepts may even take years!

Self-efficacy:

"If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning."

~Mahatma Gandhi

"People not only gain understanding through reflection, they evaluate and alter their own thinking."

~Albert Bandura

“Persons who have a strong sense of efficacy deploy their attention and effort to the demands of the situation and are spurred by obstacles to greater effort.”

~Albert Bandura

“People regulate their level and distribution of effort in accordance with the effects they expect their actions to have. As a result, their behavior is better predicted from their beliefs than from the actual consequences of their actions.

~Albert Bandura

“Pessimism becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy; it reproduces itself by crippling our willingness to act.”

~Howard Zinn

“Whenever you begin to conclude, ‘I can’t win,’ and ‘What’s the use?’ you’ve set yourself up for failure. Your pessimism becomes a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy.”

~James C. Dobson

--**Self-efficacy** is the belief in one's abilities to achieve an outcome or goal; it is a very powerful belief or lack of belief.⁸⁷ Possessing a growth mindset is closely linked to a strong self-efficacy. As I learned more than once in my Social Work program (and many times since from life experience), *how we think, is how we feel, is how we act, is how we think, is how we feel, is how we act...* it is a cycle that would benefit one to remember. If you do not *think* that all students are capable of learning and growing that will dictate how you *feel* and how you *act*, and the result is, students will be able to *see, hear, and feel* what you believe in all you do and say. If a student does not believe he or she is capable of learning and growing, those beliefs will likewise dictate how the student acts and feels. The more you can say and do consistently to encourage your students' belief in themselves, the better.

Efficacy means productiveness.

Its' synonyms include adequacy, effectiveness, competence, strength, ability, power, success, and capableness.

Its' antonyms include uselessness, failure, inability, incompetence, weakness, ineffectiveness, and inadequacy.

**Which set of words do you want guiding what you do???

3 good sites with ideas for promoting self-efficacy in students are:

4 Ways to Develop Self-Efficacy Beliefs (Self-Esteem or Confidence)

<http://reflectd.co/2014/01/20/self-efficacy-beliefs/>

Self-Efficacy: Helping Students Believe in Themselves

<https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/efficacy.html>

Motivation as Self-efficacy

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/educationalpsychology/chapter/motivation-as-self-efficacy/>